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SIPDIS

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DHS FOR US-VISIT ROBERT MOCNY

OTTAWA FOR CONS, PD AND DHS/ICE

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TAGS: [CVIS](#) [ELTN](#) [ECON](#) [PBTS](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: US-VISIT STAKEHOLDERS/MEDIA BRIEFING IN MONTREAL

1. Summary. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) US-VISIT Deputy Director Robert Mocny provided two US-VISIT briefings on November 5 to stakeholders (shippers, customs brokers, Canadian immigration officers) and media, respectively. All attendees were provided a handout: "Fact Sheet: U.S. Land Borders." The briefings went very well, and most attendees appeared relieved to have it reiterated that Canadian citizens who do not need visas are not yet subject to the program. Post is considering the possibility of holding a followup US-VISIT digital videoconference (DVC) with stakeholders not included in the November 5 briefings. (Notetakers were ConSec Officers Stephen Ashby and Maya Harris.) End summary.

2. Stakeholders Briefing. Mr. Mocny described the methodology and implementation schedule for the US-VISIT program. He cited four key DHS goals for US-VISIT:

- To enhance security of U.S. citizens and visitors
- To facilitate legitimate trade and travel
- To ensure integrity of U.S. immigration system
- To protect privacy of visitors

Mr. Mocny also detailed to stakeholders the Congressional mandates driving the US-VISIT implementation and the methods for redressing any errors that visitors may find in US-VISIT records pertaining to them.

3. Stakeholders' Briefing: Questions and Answers.

a. What provisions are being made for exit recording and control?

Answer: None will be immediately put into place, but the plan is to test radio frequency (RF) checking of "exit receipts" at 7 trial ports of entry (POE) in June-July 2005. Future plans include biometric verification of exiting visitors.

b. What about passports that get stolen before biometrics are established at a POE for an individual?

Answer: If the perpetrator used the stolen travel document, he/she would be biometrically recorded. Subsequently, when the legitimate traveler is screened, the traveler would be required to prove identity while in the secondary interview and the bad guy would be added to the impostor watch-list.

c. What prevents terrorists from just using Canadian IDs to avoid US-VISIT?

Answer: We rely on Canadian officials to safeguard against terrorists and other bad guys getting legitimate identification (ID). Inspectors also guard against their entry.

d. Will US-VISIT profile any race or ethnicity?

Answer: No. Everyone, except U.S. and Canadian citizens who do not need visas, must be screened.

e. So, Visa Waiver Program folks will undergo US-VISIT, even on charters?

Answer: Yes.

f. Will US-VISIT increase information sharing between U.S. and Canadian security and law enforcement?

Answer: Not formally, but all the current information-sharing arrangements still apply.

4. Media Briefing. Media representation included most major organizations, such as CBC, The Gazette, TQS, Le Devoir and Canadian Press. US-VISIT Deputy Director Robert Mocny provided an overview of the basic elements of the US-VISIT Program, outlined the DHS goals in US-VISIT implementation and summarized the program's applicability for prospective visitors.

15. Media Briefing: Questions and Answers.

a. Why were airports the first to implement US-VISIT?
(Note. The reporter who posed the question stated that if she were a terrorist or anyone else attempting to escape the notice of border officials then she would "definitely attempt to enter the U.S. via land." End note.)

Answer: Mocny stated that DHS adhered to deadlines decided by the U.S. Congress after the law making body appropriated \$100 million for the program. Mocny listed the deadlines, beginning with the benchmark December 31, 2003, date to launch US-VISIT at all Canadian airport POEs, then the 17 busiest land POEs by December 31, 2004, followed by all POEs by December 31, 2005.

b. How will US-VISIT affect landed immigrants and Canadian citizens?

Answer: Mocny emphasized that US-VISIT will have minimal impact on landed immigrants (LI), as they presently already report to border officials for secondary interview. According to Mocny, the only changes LIs will face are the biometric fingerprint scan and facial imaging. He added that pilot programs at the Sarnia and Port Huron POEs have shown there is no "real" added inconvenience to LIs. Further, he stated LIs may even experience fewer delays at POEs because US-VISIT eliminates the need for prospective U.S. visitors to complete Form I-94. Mocny underscored that the pilot programs at Sarnia and Port Huron, and the implementation of US-VISIT at Canadian airports, have been successful and important to creating a secure medium to collect biographic data on potential U.S. visitors (one that also guards against identity theft).

c. How will US-VISIT affect Canadians with dual citizenship?

Answer: Dual nationals who declare either their Canadian or American citizenship while presenting the appropriate corroborating identification at POEs will not be affected by US-VISIT. However, visitors to the U.S. who claim citizenship to a third country upon arrival at the POE will be subject to US-VISIT and may be expected to take part in a secondary interview.

d. Does DHS have plans to begin fingerprinting and photographing Canadian citizens?

Answer: Mocny stated that DHS understands that in addition to securing the border, the cross border economy still has to be maintained and that DHS recognizes that most people (at least 80%) who cross the US-Canadian border do not have malicious intentions. However, Mocny further stated DHS does not believe the border is secure; that the majority of people stopped through US-VISIT were taken into secondary inspection because of possible intent to overstay their visit in the U.S. and that many people with criminal convictions have been apprehended through the program. He noted that while presently the only Canadians who must participate in US-VISIT are those that require visas (i.e. fianc(e)s of American citizens, immigrants, treaty-trade investors), the 9/11 Commission made specific recommendations on the possible need to include Canadians in security measures.

e. Is it true all Canadians will require a passport to enter the U.S. as of December 31? If not, have discussions on the creation of a continental card resumed?

Answer: Mocny stated that DHS has no current plan to require Canadians to bear passports at U.S. borders, but that this may be subject to change based upon the will of the U.S. Congress. Regarding a continental-wide identification, Mocny stated that while that remains an option for the future, speculation would not be useful.

f. Will US-VISIT target minorities?

Answer: Mocny stated that the only foreign nationals not subject to US-VISIT at POEs are Canadians, a facet of the program that will ensure that everyone is treated equally. He went on to state while Canadians are exempt from US-VISIT at present, only time will tell whether Canadians will remain exempt from program participation.

g. What happens to the biographic data that is collected from US-VISIT?

Answer: Mocny replied that the data collected would be distributed within DHS as needed. He added that an inquiring foreign national would have access to the list of U.S. governmental entities that has access to their information. Mocny stated there is no plan to share the information collected from US-VISIT with Canadian officials

and that the collection of biographic data through US-VISIT has allowed DHS to track the length of visits of foreign nationals to the U.S.

h. Will the implementation of US-VISIT have any impact on the American traveler?

Answer: Mocny stated that US-VISIT will have no effect on the average American traveler.

i. Post 9/11--should Canadians get accustomed to the idea that they will eventually be subject to programs similar to US-VISIT?

Answer: Mocny reaffirmed that the only change in the procedural status quo was the launch of US-VISIT at the 17 busiest land POEs, expected to be fully operational by the December 31, 2004, deadline. He added that while U.S. policy may change in the future, he could not speculate on those potential changes.

16. Post is considering the possibility of conducting a followup US-VISIT DVC, as we had insufficient lead time to notify other stakeholders (ie., representatives from the Visa Waiver Program countries' Consulates General in our district, other travel and trade-related contacts) who may have benefited from the November 5 briefing.

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